

VZCZCXRO9597
OO RUEHAG RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHWR #0563/01 1541543
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 031543Z JUN 09
FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8376
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0770
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0192
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 0634
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0467
RHMFISS/CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1445

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 WARSAW 000563

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/CE, EAP/CM, DRL/AWH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/02/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PL](#) [CH](#)

SUBJECT: POLES HOST DALAI LAMA, RILE CHINESE

Classified By: Political Counselor F. Daniel Sainz for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jie Chi warned Polish Foreign Minister Sikorski on May 26 that Polish support for the Dalai Lama could impede the improvement of bilateral ties. The Chinese appear to be holding off on senior visits to Poland this year. The Polish government believes the Dalai Lama's return visit to Poland in July -- to accept honorary Polish citizenship -- is too soon after his December visit, and will not offer senior level meetings. The MFA will also recommend that President Lech Kaczynski not meet with the Dalai Lama, but Kaczynski may seek to distinguish himself from the Prime Minister as a more principled and committed anti-Communist. The GoP continues to seek a balance on Tibet/China policies; PM Tusk boycotted the Beijing Olympics opening ceremonies due to concerns over Tibet, but opted not to raise human rights issues during an October 2008 visit to China. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jie Chi "strongly warned" Polish FM Radoslaw Sikorski that Poland's association with the Dalai Lama would complicate further improvement in bilateral relations. The two ministers, who met May 26 on the margins of the Asia-Europe Foreign Ministers meeting in Hanoi, focused mainly on bilateral issues, especially trade, investment and commemoration this year of the two countries' 60 years of diplomatic relations. However, an MFA official told us that Yang's "lecture" on the Dalai Lama overshadowed the otherwise friendly atmospherics between the two ministers.

13. (C) Konrad Maziarz of the MFA's Asia-Pacific Department told us that the Dalai Lama had tentatively agreed to come to Warsaw for one day on July 29 to accept honorary citizenship, which the Warsaw City Council had unanimously approved last month. Although the GoP would not be involved in the visit, the MFA said it was too soon after the Dalai Lama's December visit to Poland, which received substantial media coverage. At that time, Maziarz recalled, the Dalai Lama traveled to several Polish cities. PM Donald Tusk met in Gdansk with the Dalai Lama, as did other senior Polish officials and parliamentarians in Warsaw. The meeting with President Lech Kaczynski was billed as "private," not official. The Chinese government had officially protested that visit, and the MFA likewise called in the Polish ambassador in Beijing to protest the decision to confer honorary citizenship on the Dalai Lama.

14. (C) The MFA hoped to minimize the political impact of the Dalai Lama's impending visit. According to Maziarz, no

senior GoP official will meet with him this time, and the MFA will recommend against any meetings at the presidential chancellery. Warsaw does not expect damage to the upward trend in economic ties, but Maziarz acknowledged that Beijing was likely to retaliate by not sending a senior official to any 60th anniversary events. The Chinese will also probably decline the Poles' invitation to Chinese PM Wen Jia Bao (at the last minute, Wen canceled a scheduled visit to Poland after the Prague Summit) and Foreign Minister Yang. Maziarz said decisions to decline such invitations could also be due to Poland's low-key criticism of human rights abuses and the situation in Tibet. In a conversation with Poloff, Liu Yan, Political Officer at the Chinese Embassy here, confirmed that senior Chinese visits were unlikely this year because of Beijing's concerns about the Dalai Lama.

¶5. (C) Maziarz said Poland remained optimistic about improvements in bilateral ties, particularly in the form of increased Chinese investment. There is currently approximately USD 250 million of Polish investment in China, but less than USD 100 million of Chinese investment in Poland. According to Maziarz, Chinese investment would help diversify Poland's economic and trade ties and hedge against the effects of recession, especially unemployment. Maziarz said Warsaw hoped that Wen would come with an entourage of influential businessmen. But according to the Chinese Embassy's Liu, Poland's economic attractions are more limited. In particular, Liu thought Poland did not have many exports that China could not obtain more cheaply elsewhere. Nonetheless, she said increased cooperation in other areas was possible, especially in long-term language training and

WARSAW 00000563 002 OF 002

cultural exchange programs.

¶6. (C) COMMENT: Polish policy has vacillated between forthright criticism of abuses in Tibet and deference to Chinese government sensitivities. Prime Minister Tusk announced in advance that he would not attend the opening Olympic ceremonies in Beijing last year, then stuck to his position even as other European leaders reneged on similar pledges to boycott the opening. Later, during his four-day visit to China in October 2008, Tusk did not raise human rights in meetings with the Chinese President or Prime Minister. Similarly, the GoP has sought to support the Dalai Lama, but not so stridently as to offend Beijing. As for the President, he may well reject MFA advice to steer clear of the Dalai Lama during this upcoming visit, since he sees himself as a more principled, more stalwart foe of communism than the Prime Minister.

ASHE